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 FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9876  
 INFO RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 6871  
 RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BELIZE 311  
 RUESBG/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1943  
 RUESRS/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2742  
 RUESGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 7783  
 RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 859  
 RUEHJP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 7906  
 RUESAL/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 6947  
 RUESTE/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 6124  
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1095  
 RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 1053  
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 C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 3214

RJK  
 file: (HFA)  
 Cong. Gilman

EXDIS

DEPT. PASS TO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

E.O. 12065: RDS-1 5-10-02 (MCNEIL, FRANCIS J.) OR/M  
 TAGS: PEPR, PINS, CS, NU, US, OVIP (BLOCK, HOHN R., ENDRES, T.O.)  
 SUBJECT: (C) BREAKFAST WITH NEW PRESIDENT: THE NICARAGUAN PROBLEM

REF: SAN JOSE 3186

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. DURING BREAKFAST MEETING 9 MAY, PRESIDENT MONGE SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT NICARAGUA WITH SECRETARY BLOCK, ASSISTANT SECRETARY ENDERS, AMBASSADOR MCNEIL, AND REPRESENTATIVE GILMAN. THE NEW PRESIDENT SUGGESTED THAT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA WAS PROBABLE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, GIVEN THE "VERY DIFFERENT PATHS THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE TAKING. WE, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED OURSELVES AS FRIENDS OF THE U.S., THEY JUST AS CLEARLY AS YOUR ENEMIES."

3. MONGE CHARACTERIZED THE PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY OF GRN MEMBER CORDOVA RIVAS AS HEAD OF THE NICARAGUAN DELEGATION AS "A VERY DISAGREEABLE EXPERIENCE. INSTEAD OF SENDING A RANKING REPRESENTATIVE, THEY SEND A NO-GOOD RANCHER AND DEMAND THAT HE BE TREATED AS A CHIEF OF STATE." THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINED THAT DURING HIS VISIT HERE LAST MONTH COMANDANTE BAYARDO ARCE HAD HAD THE GALL TO REQUEST THAT MONGE SEND A PERSONAL LETTER OF INVITATION TO THE INAUGURAL TO DANIEL ORTEGA, ALONG THE LINES OF SUCH LETTERS SENT BY PRESIDENT HERRERA AND OTHERS. MONGE TOLD ARCE HE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT ORTEGA WAS IN FACT THE CHIEF OF STATE AND REFUSED. "THEY WANTED TO INVOLVE ME IN

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THEIR OWN INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE, BUT I REFUSED. SO WE GOT THAT "MAL RANCHERO" AND THEY WENT TO MOSCOW INSTEAD."

4. THE PRESIDENT, AS REPORTED EARLIER, ALSO MADE CLEAR TO ARCE THAT "THE ONLY WAY TERRORISM OR GUERRILLA WARFARE CAN OPERATE IN COSTA RICA IS UNDER THE DIRECT SPONSORSHIP OF THE NICARAGUANS OR THE CUBANS." WHEN ARCE ARGUED THAT COSTA RICA'S OWN ECONOMIC CRISIS, NOT FSLN INVOLVEMENT, WAS TO BLAME FOR THE TERRORISM, MONGE SAID HE TOLD THE COMANDANTE THAT THIS WAS NOT REPEAT NOT TRUE, THAT "THE COSTA RICAN PEOPLE SHOWED IN THE LAST ELECTION EXACTLY HOW THEY WANTED TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM--THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS NOT VIOLENCE OR EXTREMISM." MONGE ALSO REITERATED THAT HE HAS "SENT SEVERAL MESSAGES" TO MANAGUA AND TO HAVANA THAT, "USING THE MARXISTS' OWN TERMINOLOGY--THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS FOR TERRORISM OR GUERRILLA OPERATIONS DO NOT REPEAT NOT EXIST IN THIS COUNTRY."

5. AMBASSADOR ENDERS NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT NICARAGUA SHOULD BE INTENT ON EXPORTING "SANDINISMO"; IT NOW REPRESENTED SOMETHING OF AN UNSTABLE ISLAND OF TOTALITARIANISM, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE RESOUNDING AFFIRMATION OF DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE PAST MONTHS IN HONDURAS, SALVADOR AND COSTA RICA. NICARAGUA AND CUBA WERE EVEN NOW MOUNTING A SIZABLE RESUPPLY OF ARMAMENTS TO SALVADOR IN PREPARATION FOR AN OFFENSIVE NEXT MONTH IN "REVENGE" FOR THE FAR LEFT'S RECENT DEFEATS. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY ALSO UNDERScoreD--AS HE DID TWICE AGAIN DURING THE CONVERSTATION--THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE USG VIEWS ITS INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM COMMITMENTS, MOST ESPECIALLY THOSE UNDER THE RIO TREATY.

6. MONGE STRESSED THROUGHOUT THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES WHICH SEPARATE COSTA RICA AND THE NICARAGUA OF THE COMANDANTES: "THEY WILL NEVER REALLY UNDERSTAND; NOT EVEN THAT DUMB RANCHER--WHO SAYS HE WAS BORN IN COSTA RICA--UNDERSTANDS. WE ARE HISTORICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY VERY ANTI-COMMUNIST. THE SANDINISTAS THINK THEY CAN SEND AN ARCE TO CONVINCE ME TO BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO THEM, BUT IT'S NOT JUST ME, IT'S OUR WHOLE PEOPLE. THE COMANDANTES ARE VERY ANGRY THAT I HAVE NOT VISITED THEM IN NICARAGUA, BUT I WILL NOT. COSTA RICANS WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY COMPROMISE WITH THE SANDINISTAS, OR WITH ANY COMMUNISTS." THE PRESIDENT NOTED THAT THE COSTA RICAN COMMUNIST PARTY HAD ALREADY CRITICIZED HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS AS "AN ATTACK ON THEM AND THEIR METHODS. AND THEY'RE RIGHT." (LATER IN THE DAY, AFL-CIO SECRETARY TREASURER DONAHUE RECOUNTED TO THE AMBASSADOR A SIMILAR CONVERSATION WITH MONGE.)

7. FINALLY, MONGE INDICATED HE INTENDED TO MOVE QUICKLY IF NECESSARY IN THE OAS CONTEXT SHOULD DIFFICULTIES OCCUR ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.

8. THIS CABLE WAS DRAFTED AFTER DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATION.

MCNEIL

END OF MESSAGE

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